

Mentoring:

Suggested Activities for Mentors and Youth



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You can offer a wide range of assistance to your mentee(s). It is critical that you involve them in determining the activities you do together and the areas in which you will be of assistance.

Many youth are reluctant to express their interests. Listen carefully for clues or try a few different activities and see how they respond. Youth enjoy both recreational and task-oriented activities (e.g., job hunting, getting a driver's license). Recognize the importance of fun.

Most young people enjoy going to new places and having a good time. They might not otherwise have many outlets for having fun. Showing that you're willing to participate in a good time may also affect his/her perspective of older people. How the activities are chosen rather than the specific activities themselves affects the development of the relationship.

“I decided that going to the museum was too ambitious. Smaller things are much more successful in our relationship. So at the very beginning, I used my notebook and I wrote down things that she was interested in doing. One was learning to use a sewing machine, which I have. The other thing she wanted to do was some cooking”.

The following is a list of areas in which you can offer assistance and support:

Social and Emotional Support

- Offer friendship and guidance.
- Talk and listen.
- Provide sympathetic counseling.
- Be a companion.

Information Sharing and Advocacy

- Help identify and learn how to use community resources.
- Serve as a troubleshooter in the event of problems between a service provider and the youth.
- Advocate for necessary services.

School

- Help them learn to take notes, study for a test, and improve study habits.
- Teach how to use the resources at a library
- Provide assistance on specific homework or classroom assignments.

- Teach how to use computers.
- Attend a parent-teacher meeting with the mentee's parents.
- Schedule a meeting with the mentee's teacher. Make sure to get the parent's permission first.
- Find books that reflect the youth's interests.
- Do crossword puzzles together as a way of expanding vocabulary.
- Discuss the drawbacks of being a school dropout.
- Keep track of the youth's school attendance.
- Help with time management.
- Help select school courses based on post high school interests.

Personal Development

- Identify effective problem-solving and decision-making strategies.
- Practice ways to communicate better with family and friends.
- Help set and work on specific goals.
- Discuss healthy lifestyles. Talk about drug abuse, smoking, alcohol, safer sex, no sex, eating habits, etc.
- Help identify his/her strengths and areas in need of improvement.
- Discuss how the media (television, radio, newspapers, magazines, etc.) influence thinking.
- Discuss rules of good etiquette and manners
- Talk about the difficulties of teenage parenthood.
- Discuss how to handle peer pressure.

Career Development

- Discuss career options.
- Visit businesses that have jobs related to careers of interest.
- Practice how to fill out a job application.
- Practice employment interview skills.
- Discuss good work habits.
- Help develop a resume and a cover letter.
- Identify people they can use for references for jobs or college.
- Write for college brochures and literature on vocational training programs.
- Help find out how to apply for financial aid for college or vocational schools.
- Help college-interested youth study for entrance exams.
- Take mentee on a tour of college campuses or vocational schools.
- Explore financial aid available for college or vocational schools.

Culture and Recreation

- Socialize with other mentor-youth pairs.
- Go shopping.
- Go to dinner.
- Go hiking.
- Play sports (e.g., baseball, pool, bowling); learn a new sport together.
- Go to a sports or cultural event.
- Go to the movies, a concert, or a play.
- Listen to music together.
- Go to a museum or zoo.
- Take a walking tour of the neighborhood.
- Go on a picnic.
- Work on an arts and crafts project.
- Develop a mutual hobby.

Other

- Develop a personal video or slide presentation.
- Make a personal collage on family, friends, interests, etc.
- Attend a religious service.
- Develop and perform a project of service to the community.
- Help youth learn how to budget money.
- Make a handmade gift or card together for another person.
- Take out a subscription for the youth to a magazine of his/her interest.
- Talk generally about the cost of living on your own.

Additional for Teen Parents

- Select appropriate toys for babies and help teen parents learn how to play with infants and children.
- Prepare grocery list keeping budget and nutrition in mind.
- Identify community resources for pregnant low-income women.
- Identify medical/health resources.
- Discuss childcare options.

